

THE WAY FORWARD

DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

FEBRUARY 2016

LEADING THE WAY

Introducing Dr. David Chandler, Executive Director, DFCS.

FORWARD THINKING

What is DFCS? What's our vision? Where are our priorities?

VISIONARY MOVEMENT

The future of child welfare

Memorial: Georgia McCollum, ASWS

Suddenly, the DFCS family was one less. Ms. Georgia McCollum passed away unexpectedly in January 2016. We honor Ms. McCollum by carrying on her service to the children and families of Mississippi.

Dionna Evans, Regional Director for Region V-E told us this: Georgia was truly an asset to Region V-East. Georgia had a glow that would light the room and would do anything asked. She worked very hard to make sure Smith County was 100% focused on serving children in the best way.

"Mrs. Georgia McCullum was a lady who loved the Lord and she loved her workers. Mrs. Georgia was fair, hard working and a very strong person." FPS Cindy Crosby

She worked in resource and joined Smith County as an ASWS in March 2015. In the short time she was in Smith County, Ms. McCollum and her staff grew very fond of each other. Her passing creates a huge gap in the DFCS family. We love Georgia and will forever miss her.

The WAY FORWARD is edited by Dr. Anna Lyn Whitt, Field Operations Director for the MS Division of Family and Children's Services



THE WAY FORWARD:

MISSISSIPPI'S DFCS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to DFCS's new way of communication: THE WAY FORWARD. This inaugural edition of THE WAY FORWARD orients you to who DFCS is, what we do, and how we are moving Mississippi forward in child welfare. This monthly newsletter will highlight DFCS events each month.



Leading the Way: Dr. David Chandler Envisions Forward Thinking for Families

Gov. Phil Bryant appointed Dr. David Chandler to lead the Mississippi Division of Family and Children's Services in December 2015.

Dr. Chandler was an associate justice on the Mississippi Supreme Court. He won election to the court on November 4, 2008, and began in 2009. He stepped down on December 7, 2015, to become the director of Mississippi's foster care system under the Division of Family and Children's Services.

He holds a LL.M. in judicial process from the University of Virginia and a J.D. from the University of Mississippi. He also has doctorate, master and bachelor degrees in education from Mississippi State University. Dr. Chandler's

education in and service to Mississippi is DFCS's greatest strength for the future. Combining the vision of the future and all the best of the past is Dr. Chandler's motive for moving Mississippi's DFCS forward.

The beginning of Dr. Chandler's career was spent in education where he worked in different aspects of the field. He served as a research and curriculum specialist at Mississippi State University where he directed the development of curriculum material for secondary and post-secondary work force training programs. His work was designed to provide a more skilled work force in order to attract business and industry to Mississippi.

It is his experience in this work that will help DFCS with one of the biggest challenges- recruiting and retaining the best staff. "I think the first step is putting together a plan to attract more certified, educated, credentialed social workers," Chandler stated recently to the New York Times. Raising the bar for excellence in our workforce, including salary realignment proposals and a more streamlined personnel process is top on Dr. Chandler's agenda.

After law school, Chandler worked with a private law firm. He also served as a municipal judge in Weir, Mississippi, from 1999 to 2001. In 2000, he was elected to the Mississippi Court of Appeals. He was re-elected in 2006 and served until his election to the Mississippi Supreme Court in 2008. He also serves as an adjunct professor at Mississippi College School of Law. His court experience and experience in academia bridges the social and legal systems at play in Mississippi. Collaborative effort of all social, health, educational, judicial systems is the pathway to success for child welfare in Mississippi. Dr. Chandler is up to the challenge and leading the way forward.

Division of Family and Children's Services: Vision for Future Pathways

Our **VISION** is that children grow up in families, safe from harm, without fear of constant disruption and having the opportunity to experience continuity of relationships. We have a vision of children developing a sense of stability and of belonging. We strive for no child to continue to experience abuse or neglect while working with DFCS and families positively changing, as a result of our intervention.

Our **MISSION** is to lead Mississippi in protecting children and youth from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by providing services to promote safe and stable families.

Our **TOP PRIORITIES** are to focus on three critical aspects of family and children's services:

- Safety and Well-Being
- Timeliness of Services
- Quality of Services

VALUES and VISION: THE WAY FORWARD IN OUR WORK

- **Competence:** We have technical skills and knowledge; we work with common sense; we make informed decisions; and we follow through to achieve successful outcomes.
- **Integrity:** We are honest in our interactions; we are accountable for our actions; and we do the right thing.
- **Responsibility:** We do what we say we are going to do; we take initiative.
- **Respect:** We treat others with kindness, compassion, dignity, and honor differences of our clients and each other.
- **Personal Courage:** We are loyal to the Mission of DFCS; we advocate for our clients; we lead by example even when doing so carries risk.
- **Collaboration:** We make decisions for the common good; we share resources based on need; we work together effectively in teams; and work with a collective knowledge of all programs and services.

SAFETY AND WELL-BEING: OUR TOP PRIORITY

Promoting safe and stable families is the top priority of the Division Family and Children's Services

What We Do for Families and Children

- *Promote safe and stable families*
- *Protect children from child abuse, neglect, and exploitation*
- *Provide foster care and adoption services*
- *Prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation through education*

SAVE THE DATES....APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH...EVENTS ARE OCCURING STATEWIDE

- *If you wish to make a difference in your community or want to help with an awareness event, contact your local DFCS office.*

Report Child Abuse

Call **1-800-222-8000** to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child in Mississippi or report on-line at **www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov**

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